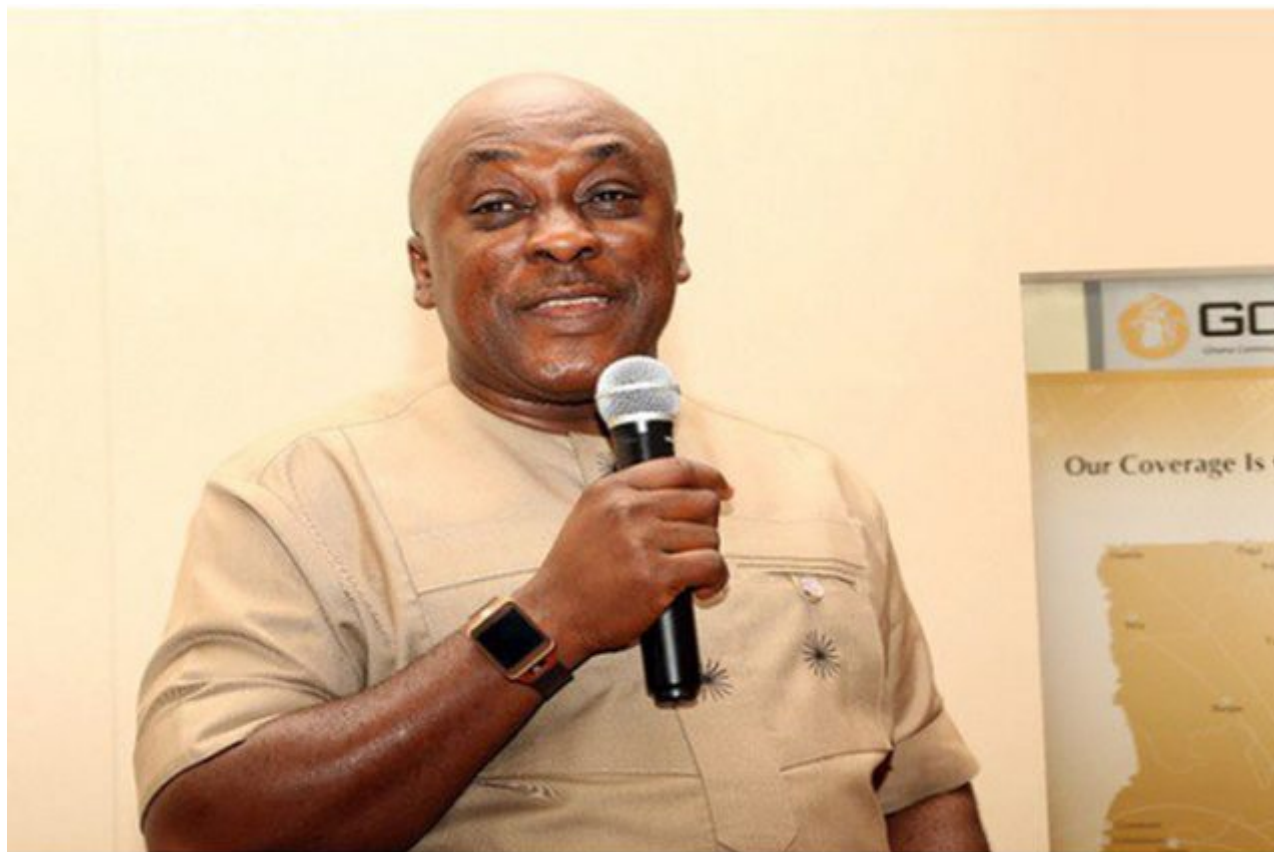


## Ghana Cannot Contain Two Single Window Operators

Apr 19, 2017



A Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Carlos Ahenkorah has observed that Ghana as a country and signatory to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement is too tiny to accommodate two Single Window operators in the country.

He has therefore challenged the pioneer and only single window operator, Ghana Community Network Services Limited (GCNet) to speedily re-double its efforts in actualising the full breadth of Single Window operations in the country.

He recalled the break-through GCNet brought when it led the drive to automate trade facilitation and port clearance processes in the country and the difference that it brought to trade and port operators.

He particularly praised the Ghana Integrated Cargo Clearance Systems (GICCS) deployed by GCNet as efficient and robust enough to deliver on any valuation needs and address any bottlenecks in the overall clearance systems at the ports to deepen trade facilitation and enhance revenue mobilisation.

Mr. Ahenkorah shared these sentiments at a luncheon ceremony in Accra after the 61st Board Meeting and 16th Annual General Meeting of GCNet.

He noted that GCNet had taken too long in securing the manifest, the seed document in clearance processes at the ports from source, a situation that may have encouraged other operators to exploit the loophole to try to secure that right from the International Air Transport Association.

The Deputy Trade Minister however noted that if GCNet had connected Maersk Lines to transmit its manifest into the Ghana Customs Management System (GCMS) over the past three years then there is no way that it could not oblige other carriers to emulate that example and ensure that both air and sea manifest are transmitted expeditiously.

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He also urged GRA (Customs Division) as the statutory body to assist GCNet to get all other carriers to do so with dispatch going forward.

Mr. Ahenkorah He also charged GCNet to remain committed to their tenets of innovation and service delivery and work harder to expand the scope of its TradeNet Single Window platforms in order to ward off any superfluous and duplicitous competition.

Also speaking at the ceremony, Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Shippers Authority, Dr. Kofi Mbiah challenged Government to be bold to speedily resolve critical issues militating against the full actualisation of Single Window implementation in the country, with Ghana having been acknowledged as a pioneer in Single Window operations by international bodies like the World Bank and ITC and a number of countries having undertaking familiarization visits to Ghana to learn about the GCNet experience.

Dr. Mbiah noted that in as much as there was the need for collaboration between GCNet and other operators, it was also extremely important to define the parameters of engagement to create a level playing field for all players in the trade facilitation and revenue

mobilisation eco-system.

Welcoming guests earlier to the event, the Executive Chairman of GCNet, Dr. Nortey Omaboe, noted that as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) conceived since its inception, the model over time had proved to be the most effective way of executing such a national mandate to support revenue mobilisation by Government, foster trade facilitation and enhance business competitiveness.

Dr. Omaboe observed that Government's quest for increased revenue in an environment of reduced taxes to stimulate private sector growth meant greater focus on GCNet to come up with new initiatives to support revenue mobilisation efforts. He therefore outlined a number of initiatives that GCNet had proposed to Government to enhance revenue mobilization.

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These include the need to improve upon the valuation of consignments, the need to invoke bonds for transit goods that do not exit the country after 14 days and the review of the paltry charges currently imposed, ensuring that warehoused goods are ex-warehoused within the stipulated time periods, tighter control of free zone operations and the duty and tax exemptions granted thereon, the assignment of all newly registered taxpayers to relevant GRA Tax Offices and ensuring they file tax returns, etc.

Dr. Omaboe however expressed concerned about non-clarity in the role of some entrants in the trade facilitation and revenue mobilisation space following the cessation of the destination inspection companies and called for urgent steps to address the worrying development; and its inherent duplications and hence unnecessary cost to Government.

He was confident what he termed 'unnecessary complication' would eventually be resolved mindful of the consideration that the interest of the country should remain paramount and be protected.

Dr. Omaboe assured guests that GCNet was poised for further growth and development in the years ahead as it leverages upon its continuous innovations in deploying systems that bring greater value to the Government and people of Ghana

Among the dignitaries present at the luncheon were the Deputy Minister of Finance, Hon. Kweku Kwarteng, the Tax Policy Advisor to the Minister of Finance, Dr. Larbi-Siaw, the GRA Commissioner-General, Mr. Kofi Nti, the Registrar-General, Mrs. Jemima Oware, Mr.

John Vianney Kuudamnuru, the outgoing Commissioner of Customs, as well as board members of MCNet the Single Window operator of Mozambique.

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